

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5066

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 8735

E.O. 11652: GDS

SUBJECT: AIFLD PROGRAM IN COLOMBIA

REF STATE 200206 PHILLIPS MEMO DEBRIEFING

WITH AMB VAKY DATED JULY 10, 1974

SUMMARY

1. THE AMBASSADOR AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM (CT) MET WITH REGIONAL AIFLD DIRECTOR JESSE FRIEDMAN AND AIFLD COUNTRY PROGRAM DIRECTOR (CPD) IN COLOMBIA VICENTE SOSA ON SEPT 24 AND 26, 1974 TO EXAMINE THE AIFLD PROGRAM OPTIONS IN COLOMBIA. PARTICIPANTS REACHED AGREEMENT THAT AIFLD PROGRAM FUNDS WILL NO LONGER BE USED TO SUBSIDIZE ACTIVISTS/PROMOTERS FOR THE UNION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (UTC) AND THE COLOMBIAN WORKERS CONFEDERATION (CT) OR THEIR AFILIATES OR FOR THE ITS AND AGRARIAN PROGRAMS. AIFLD AND THE CT AGREED ON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROJECTS PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR THE 1975 PROGRAM SUBMISSION NOW BEING PREPARED BY THE CPD. EDUCATION BUDGET REQUEST FOR YEAR BEGINNING APRIL 1, 1975 WILL BE APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO CURRENT EDUCATION-PROMOTERS BUDGET,

E.E. \$40,200, PLUS \$12,000 FOR THE AGRARIAN PROGRAM AND \$15,000 FOR THE ITS PROGRAM. AIFLD WILL ALSO REQUEST A REPLENISHABLE FUND OF \$50,000 FOR THE SOCIAL PROJECTS PROGRAM, WHICH IS TO BE DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN THE TWO CONFEDERATIONS IN THE FORM OF GRANTS-IN-AID. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE ORGANIZATIONS WILL LEND SUMS TO THEIR AFFILIATES FOR SOCIAL PROJECTS AT LITTLE OR NO
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INTEREST, REPAYABLE PERHAPS IN THE FORM OF INCREASED DUES

PAYMENTS TO THE CONFEDERATIONS. ONCE THE LOANS ARE REPAID OR DUES INCREASED TO THE CONFEDERATIONS, THE UTC AND CTC SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SERVICES WHICH SHOULD STRENGTHEN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE TIES BETWEEN THE CONFEDERATIONS AND THEIR AFFILIATES. END SUMMARY

2. THE AMBASSADOR STRONGLY ENDORSES THE SOCIAL PROJECTS GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM. AIFLD CPD SOSA WILL ATTEMPT TO SQUEEZE SOME FUNDS FOR THE SOCIAL PROJECTS GRANT-IN-AID PROGRAM OUT OF HIS BUDGET. IT IS EXPECTED ALSO THAT AIFLD/W WILL EARMARK A SPECIFIC AMOUNT OF REGIONAL SOCIAL PROJECT FUNDS FOR COLOMBIA. SINCE THESE TWO SOURCES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SATISFY ESTIMATED NEEDS OF \$50,000, USAID WILLING TO UTILIZE SOME OF SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY FUNDS, BUT BELIEVES INCREASE IN \$50,000 CEILING WOULD BE REQUIRED. WOULD APPRECIATE AID/W ADVICE AS TO AVAILABILITY OF ADDITIONAL \$25,000 SDA MONEY FOR THIS PURPOSE.

3. SEVERAL FACTORS WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN CONVINCING THE CT AND THE AIFLD REPS TO ELIMINATE THE ACTIVIST/PRO-MOTER PORTION OF THE AIFLD PROGRAM. OF OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE IS THE FACT THAT USG-FINANCED ACTIVISTS MIGHT AT SOME POINT JEOPARDIZE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH COLOMBIA. PRESIDENT LOPEZ IS SENSITIVE ABOUT FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN COLOMBIA AND ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR COLOMBIA TO DEPEND ON FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. THIS SENSITIVITY HAS PROBABLY BEEN HEIGHTENED BY RECENT DISCLOSURES CONCERNING ALLEGED CIA ACTIVITIES IN OTHER LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THERE IS A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT LOPEZ MIGHT AT SOME TIME OBJECT TO USG FUNDING OF ACTIVISTS AS "INTERVENTION" PARTICULARLY SHOULD THE UTC AND CTC BECOME INVOLVED IN A CONFRONTATION EITHER WITH THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION OVER THE QUESTION OF A UNIFIED LABOR MOVEMENT AS PROPOSED BY LOPEZ OR WITH THE COMMUNIST-LED TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION OF COLOMBIAN WORKERS (CSTC) WHICH, NOW THAT IT IS LEGAL, IS BOUND TO INCREASE COMPETITION WITH THE UTC AND CTC. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THAT A UNIFIED LABOR MOVEMENT REMAINS A LOPEZ GOAL. NEVERTHELESS, THE UTC AND CTC HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY WOULD RESIST GOVERNMENT-IMPOSED UNITY. THE CSTC HAS REQUESTED

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THE MINISTER OF LABOR TO EXPEL AIFLD FROM COLOMBIA AS A DIVISIVE ELEMENT, AND IS BOUND TO EXERT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE AS THE MONTHS WEAR ON. WE BELIEVE THE MINISTER OR PRESIDENT LOPEZ WOULD BE LESS LIKELY TO GIVE IN TO THE CSTC, EVEN IF SO INCLINED, IF THE AIFLD PROGRAM IS CONFINED TO ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL PROJECTS.

4. FINALLY, WE ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT THE ACTIVIST/PRO-

MOTER PROGRAM HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL OR USED FOR THE PURPOSE INTENDED. IDEALLY, THE PROMOTERS COULD HAVE BEEN USED FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE CONFEDERATIONS AND THEIR AFFILIATES. YET, AVAILABLE INFORMATION INDICATES THAT PARTICULARLY UTC PRESIDENT CUEVAS WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST VOCIFEROUS SUPPORTER OF THE ACTIVIST PROGRAM (REF B) HAS USED THE SUBSIDY PAYMENTS TO REMUNERATE LAYALISTS OR TO BUY OFF POTENTIAL OPPONENTS WITHOUT REGARD TO PERFORMANCE. CUEVAS MAY OBJECT TO THE ELIMINATION OF THE ACTIVIST PROGRAM, BUT WE EXPECT THAT HE WILL GO ALONG, HOWEVER RELUCTANTLY.

5. FRIEDMAN WILL CONTACT GEORGE PHILLIPS, LA/MRSD/L TO EXPLAIN PROPOSED CHANGES IN MORE DETAIL. MEANWHILE AIFLD CPD SOSA IS PREPARING FY 1975 COUNTRY LABOR PROGRAM (CLP) AND WILL REVISE REMAINING FY 1974 CLP TO REFLECT THE CHANGES.
VAKY

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